United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

◆ The two Somali factions commit themselves tonight at United Nations headquarters to an immediate cessation of hostilities and to the maintenance of a cease-fire in Mogadiscio; a high-level delegation of United Nations and three regional organizations to visit the capital of Somalia before the end of February to conclude a cease-fire agreement.

◆ Dick Thornburgh of United States appointed United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and Jan Eliasson of Sweden Emergency Relief Coordinator.

◆ Donors pledge some $41.7 million against target of $50 millions for United Nations Emergency Relief Fund.

◆ General Assembly appropriates $200 million for first phase of deployment of the Authority in Cambodia and $19.2 million for Advance Mission; Mario Bettati of France and Lucretia Myers of United States appointed to International Civil Service Commission.

◆ Libya's request for special session of General Assembly on international terrorism does not obtain necessary majority.

◆ Security Council recommends to General Assembly Azerbaijan for United Nations membership.

◆ Three high-level United Nations missions to go to former Soviet Union over the weekend to assess urgent health needs of women and children.

◆ UNCTAD VIII hears Swiss proposal that it be converted into centre for economic analysis -- a forum for views on economic policies and alternative approaches on development.

◆ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to send emergency team to Bangladesh to help more than 60,000 refugees fleeing across Myanmar border.

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For information media—not an official record

◆ Foreign Minister of Russian Federation addresses disarmament conference in Geneva.

◆ United Nations Disaster Relief Organization appeals for international assistance for more than 9,000 Cubans affected by flooding in several coastal areas on that island.

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The two Somali factions committed themselves tonight at United Nations headquarters to an immediate cessation of hostilities and to the maintenance of a cease-fire in Mogadiscio. To this end, they signed pledges to that effect in the presence of the representatives of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The factions also agreed to the visit to the capital of Somalia before the end of February of a high-level delegation composed of representatives of the United Nations and the three regional organizations to conclude a cease-fire.

The representatives of the United Nations and the three regional organizations further exchanged views on the modalities for the next phase of their joint efforts, that is the convening of an all-embracing national reconciliation conference aimed at the achievement of a lasting peaceful solution of the Somali problem.

The cease-fire agreement was signed following several rounds of negociations at United Nations headquarters between all parties concerned, with the participation of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has announced two additional appointments in connection with the changes in the top echelon of the United Nations Secretariat.

Dick Thornburgh of the United Nations has been appointed Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, effective 1 March, and Jan Eliasson of Sweden has been appointed Emergency Relief Coordinator, also at the level of Under-Secretary-General.

Mr. Thornburgh, who previously served two terms as Governor of Pennsylvania, held the post of seventy-sixth Attorney-General of the United States from 1988 to 1991. He is currently a partner in the Pittsburg law firm of Kirkpatrick and Lockhart.

Mr. Eliasson, who has been the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations since 1988, will take up his new functions in the coming weeks and will be in charge of coordinating the emergency assistance, as outlined by the General Assembly last December. Activities currently under way include programmes in the Horn of Africa, South-East Asia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Central America. He will work closely with the Secretary-General.

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In his capacity, Mr. Eliasson will be in charge of the management of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, to be established by the Secretary-General as a cash-flow mechanism of $50 million to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the organizations of the UN system.

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In a related development, a United Nations spokesman has announced pledges of some $41.7 million against its target of $50 million to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, following a meeting today of potential donors for contributions.

In announcing the appointment of the new Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Eliasson of Sweden, the Secretary-General said the establishment of the Fund would go a long way to facilitate the Organization's rapid response.

In response to the Secretary-General's remarks, Mr. Eliasson said the United Nations humanitarian structure would face the difficult task of balancing the need for access to victims and the respect for sovereignty. He also stressed the need to address the root causes of disasters including poverty.

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The General Assembly this morning appropriated $200 million for goods and services required for the initial operation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The UNTAC will be responsible for administering Cambodia during its transition period; monitoring and enforcing protection of human rights; verifying the cease-fire; and conducting elections in which some 4.3 million people are eligible to participate. The elections are envisaged to take place from late April to early May of 1993 to accommodate the country's weather cycle.

Also this morning, the Assembly appropriated some 19.2 million, including $10 million previously authorized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for the expanded mandate of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) for the period from 15 January to 30 April.

By both decisions, the Assembly urged Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, and invited voluntary contributions in cash or in kind.

Also this morning, the Assembly appointed Mario Bettati (France) and Lucretia Myers (United States) to fill vacancies on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) through 31 December 1993.

The Assembly will meet again on Friday, 28 February, to consider the admission of new members. It will resume its forty-sixth session on Tuesday, 7 April, and again on Tuesday, 23 June. The duration of the resumed sessions will be contingent upon the issues to be considered.

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The Secretary-General has stated, in a note dated 12 February, that the request by Libya that a special session of the General Assembly be convened to consider an item on international terrorism had not been granted, given that the majority of Member States needed to concur in the request had not been obtained.

In a letter dated of 7 January, the Permanent Representative of Libya had asked for a special session to consider an item entitled "Danger posed by the phenomenon of international terrorism to the international peace and security and a number of other grave issues of concern to all nations". The Secretary-General communicated the request to all Member States on 9 January and inquired whether they concurred in the convening of the session. By 8 February, one Member (the Sudan) had concurred and one Member (Belarus) had not concurred in the request.

On 21 January, the Security Council, in resolution 731, had called on the Libyan Government to provide "full and effective" response to requests for cooperation in establishing responsibility for the destruction of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772.

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The Security Council today recommended to the General Assembly that it admit Azerbaijan for United Nations membership. A former Soviet Republic, Azerbaijan is one of eight Republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) recommended for United Nations membership this year.

The General Assembly will meet on Friday, 28 February, to admit the new members.

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The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Andrei V. Kozyrev, yesterday told the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that the most urgent task facing it was the completion of talks on the total prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. Though his country assumed full responsibility for the destruction of such weapons, international cooperation and some help from abroad could play a role in resolving such an undertaking, he noted.

In a message to the Conference, Russia's President, Boris N. Yeltsin observed that the cold war confrontation had left a heritage of mountains of weapons, huge armies and entire defence-oriented industries employing millions of people. His recent talks with leaders of many States had revealed political prerequisites for doing away with that legacy through joint efforts, he said, and the Conference should help achieve that goal. The people of Russia, he said, counted on the assistance of the entire international community in eliminating the world's largest arms arsenal, which his country had inherited from the former Soviet Union.

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced today that it will be sending a high-level mission to the former Soviet Union over the weekend to begin assessments of the urgent health needs of women and children. Collaborative missions of UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO), they include two Assistant Secretaries-General and staff from the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Atlanta-based Centres for Disease Control.

The UNICEF said that during the next twelve days, the missions would examine the maternal and child health, nutritional, and water and sanitation requirements in 14 former Soviet republics. Their assessments will provide a first view of priorities and strategy for an international response in support of urgent and medium-term needs.

Last December, as part of an international relief effort to meet immediate health care needs in Moscow, UNICEF airlifted German funded medical supplies worth $200,000 for distribution to 11 children's hospitals in the Russian capital.

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The flow of resources from debtor countries to developed countries has been of concern to delegates participating in the general debate now underway at the Eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD VIII in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

Some speakers addressing the issue have stated that by providing capital in the form of debt service, debtor nations were indirectly contributing to the growth of developed countries. Others have called for debt reduction measures for middle income as well as least developed countries, and have urged industrial countries to make use of the peace dividend for development.

Switzerland's Minister and Chief of Service for Development of the Federal Office of External Affairs, Jean-Daniel Gerber, proposed that the UNCTAD be converted into a centre for economic analysis, a forum where views on economic policies and the search for alternative approaches to problems could be harmonized -- a market place of ideas on development.

Among other speakers addressing the Conference, the Director-General for the Ministry of Trade of Iraq, Farouk Salman Al-Obaidie, said the economic embargo against Iraq was "one of the greatest crimes of our time", and threatened not only Iraq but the future of mankind. He stressed that all States must exercise national responsibility to protect their independence and build the material and legal foundation of a new, secure, equitable and healthy economic order.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is sending an emergency team to Bangladesh to help the more than 60,000 refugees who have fled across the border from Myanmar. The move is in response to an urgent

appeal for help from the Government of Bangladesh, which reported that its resources were being stretched to breaking point by the influx.

High Commissioner Sadako Ogata, in a statement issued today, said she was deeply concerned about the conditions in Myanmar that were forcing people to flee at a rate of 400 to 600 a day. She expressed her gratitude to Bangladesh for its generosity towards the refugees and urged other countries in the region not to forcibly return those seeking asylum on their territory.

An initial $100,000 has been allocated from the Emergency Fund for urgently needed supplies. Within the next few days UNHCR will deploy additional field staff, a sanitation engineer and a site planner. Once a comprehensive assistance programme has been mapped out, additional amounts will be released from the Fund, followed by an appeal to donors.

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The United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) reported today that the Government of Cuba is appealing for international assistance to help the more than 9,000 people affected by flooding in several coastal areas due to storm waves and intense rains from 6 to 10 February.

The storms damaged or destroyed more than 2,000 houses, disrupted food supplies and caused thousands of people to be evacuated. Anticipating further flooding, UNDRO is liaising with the Cuban authorities to formulate prevention and preparedness measures. It has also provided a $25,000 emergency grant and has said that it is prepared to channel contributions from donors.

The hardest hit areas include Havana, Villaclara, Ciego de Avila and Holguin.

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